

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 88

By Helton

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Catherine Marshall
Neely of Chattanooga.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of Catherine Marshall Neely of Chattanooga; and

WHEREAS, a legendary teacher and coach at East Ridge High School, Catherine Neely enjoyed a storied fifty-year career during which she compiled over 2,000 career wins yet cherished most her success in mentoring and molding the lives of the countless teenage girls she coached, who eagerly took to the guidance bestowed on them by "Mama Cat"; and

WHEREAS, a graduate of the University of Chattanooga, Catherine Neely began her celebrated career at East Ridge High School in 1964 at the age of twenty-one and coached the Lady Pioneers without a pay stipend for the next ten years; throughout her fifty-year coaching career, she coached volleyball, basketball, and softball; and

WHEREAS, a true pioneer and champion for women, Coach Neely was instrumental in helping TSSAA officials implement Title IX when it was passed in 1972, helping to grow girls' sports across Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, before her retirement in 2014, Catherine Neely set a tremendous record of achievement during her tenure at East Ridge High School as her volleyball teams won 1,395 matches, which ranks third all-time nationally, and made seventeen appearances at the state tournament, winning championships in 1997 and 2005 and finishing runner-up in 1988 and 1989; and

WHEREAS, Coach Neely was named the National Volleyball Coach of the Year in 2006 and honored with the USA Volleyball Lifetime Achievement and Service Award in 2008; and

WHEREAS, her Lady Pioneers basketball teams compiled an overall record of 626-354, winning eight district championships and making twenty-eight regional appearances; under her tutelage, seventy-two Lady Pioneers were named all-state in basketball or volleyball; and

WHEREAS, named Hamilton County Teacher of the Year on two occasions before her retirement from teaching in 1997, Coach Neely served as athletic director for East Ridge High School for twenty years, and the school's gymnasium was most appropriately named in her honor; and

WHEREAS, Catherine Neely was the first female in Tennessee to be inducted into the National High School Hall of Fame, and she was honored with membership in six other hall of fames, including the TSSAA Hall of Fame, the Tennessee Sports Hall of Fame, and the Greater Chattanooga Sports Hall of Fame; and

WHEREAS, Catherine Neely was also deeply devoted to her family, and she always endeavored to remain true to family values of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, Catherine Neely enjoyed the loving companionship of her husband of fifty-nine years, William "Bill" Neely, and was the proud mother of Marshall Allen (Tammy) Neely and beloved grandmother of Travis (Brittany) Neely, Tyler Neely, Adam (Michelle) Pitre, and Christian (Robbie) Davis; and

WHEREAS, she will be sadly mourned but fondly remembered by her sister, Carol Beddingfield; her great-grandchildren, Presely, Payton, Rylee, and Cash; and a host of extended family members, former players, and dear friends; and

WHEREAS, she was preceded in death by her parents, James "Tooter" Marshall and Gladys Marshall; and

WHEREAS, Catherine Neely leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all her chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED TWELFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of Catherine Marshall Neely, reflecting fondly upon

her impeccable character and her stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mrs. Neely.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy and upon proper request made to the appropriate clerk, the language appearing immediately following the State seal appear without House or Senate designation.